

## BACK THEN

Everything was better back then.  
Even my nostalgia was better,  
more piercing, more true.  
I miss missing things that much,  
but not as much as I missed  
missing things back then.  
Even my anxieties about the future,  
which have indeed come to pass,  
were more vivid back then,  
more real. Reality itself seemed  
more real back then – this clanking  
stage-play only a fool could find  
convincing – I fell for it all,  
and it killed me, again and again.  
Ghosts of myself wander  
the cities I've lived in, thinking  
of other cities, imagining me  
here imagining them.  
We nod to each other across  
the years, the way the last line  
of a poem will sometimes  
look back, wistfully,  
at the first.

John Brehm